

# BUSINESS VOICE

HALIFAX'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE



**VOTE FOR YOUR MAYOR:**  
INTERVIEWS WITH MIKE SAVAGE  
AND MATT WHITMAN **Pg 13**



**ACCESSIBILITY GOES DIGITAL**

Examining needs beyond physical access

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**BLACK BUSINESS INITIATIVE**

Driving Black business growth and excellence

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**CHARITABLE CAUSES**

Garnering support from Gen Z

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# Meet Again

## HALIFAX

### *Nothing beats an in-person meeting.*

Over the past several months, your team has made it work with Zoom meetings, conference calls, and Microsoft Teams. They've shared ideas through the Cloud, and countless working documents - But did they collaborate? Teams have had to adapt to new ways of doing business - putting safety first and moving operations online.

Live and in-person meetings are happening throughout the city, and organizers and attendees agree: Meeting in person is smart, simple, and safe.

***Find tips, venue listings, advice, resources and more to host your next meeting in Halifax at [meetagainhalifax.com](http://meetagainhalifax.com)***



#### WHY MEETINGS MATTER IN HALIFAX

- In a typical year, Halifax welcomes **5.3 million overnight stays** including business travellers attending meetings, events and conventions.
- The meeting and convention sector accounts for **9%** of Halifax's tourism industry and provides **\$115 million** in economic spending.
- There are more than 1,000 jobs directly linked to the meetings and events industry.
- Meetings and events support a variety of employment opportunities in Halifax. This includes professionals working in the hospitality sector, at hotels and venues, as well as event planners, audiovisual technicians, artists and more.





They knew exactly what we needed and arranged it all, with hand sanitizer everywhere and staff wearing masks. I didn't have to worry about it – I knew we were in safe hands, literally.

**Ivy Ho**

*Director of Communications,  
Downtown Halifax Business Commission*

The client wanted to be sure everything was completely safe and following protocols, so that's why they engaged a professional to produce the meeting for them.

**Nicole Langille**

*Free People Marketing & Events*

Often when you're [on] a video or conference call, you're focused on a question-answer... It's not really a time to be able to have an open discussion.

**Megan Delaney**

*President of the Hotel Association  
of Nova Scotia*

Being together is core to everything else here, so without us meeting that way, we're giving up a bit of ourselves and what makes us special as people.

**Jeff Ransome**

*General Manager  
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel*

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**U** *We have not forgotten what it means to work in Atlantic Canada and how blessed we are to be able to do what we love to do every day in this region."* **23**  
— Allan MacIntosh, President & Co-Owner, Marco Group Limited



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# CHAMBER EVENTS

For a full and up-to-date list of Chamber events, please visit [www.halifaxchamber.com/events](http://www.halifaxchamber.com/events)

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

**BUSINESS SUPPORT SERIES: What Does Building Back Better Really Mean For My Business?**

September 17  
10:00 - 11:00 AM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

**BUSINESS SUPPORT SERIES: Halifax Stanfield's COVID-19 Response and Recovery**

September 22  
10:00 - 11:00 AM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

**BUSINESS SUPPORT SERIES: Let's get digital - A free offering for Halifax Chamber members**

September 24  
10:00 - 11:00 AM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

**Building for the Future: A Webinar Series Aimed at Supporting Nova Scotian Businesses**

Starting Monday October 19  
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

## IN-PERSON EVENTS

**Business After Hours with BNI at the Pondsides Amphitheatre**

September 16  
4:30 PM - 6:30 PM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

**Wine on the Waves: A Chamber Wine + Cheese**

September 18  
The Tall Ship Silva  
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

**\*NOW VIRTUAL\* POWER LUNCH: How to Create a Dementia Friendly Business**

September 23  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

**\*NOW VIRTUAL\* Dementia Friendly Ambassador Training**

September 30  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  
REGISTER [HERE](#)

## SAVE THE DATE

**2020 CHAMBER GOLF CHALLENGE**

October 7  
Glen Arbour  
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM  
**SOLDOUT** WAITLIST [HERE](#)

**Sponsorship opportunities available!**

**HALIFAX SMALL BUSINESS WEEK**

October 19 - 23  
For more info, GO [HERE](#)

**WONDER WOMEN**

December 4  
Halifax Convention Centre  
for more info, GO [HERE](#)

**HALIFAX BUSINESS AWARDS**

January 28, 2021  
Halifax Convention Centre  
Nominations are **NOW OPEN**

**\*WE WILL PROVIDE UPDATES ON THESE EVENTS OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS\***

Contact [chris@halifaxchamber.com](mailto:chris@halifaxchamber.com)  
for sponsorship opportunities

# Celebrate the wins

Taking a look at our wins from the last few months

@prezhfxchamber



**PATRICK SULLIVAN**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

Summer is coming to a close and although I'm sad to see the hot weather leave us, I am always excited to see September arrive and a fresh weather and opportunities for exciting change that a new school year will bring.

I'm also excited to talk about some of the victories we have had these last few months and present some of the opportunities we see as we move into the fall. Of course it is a different year this year but to help keep us motivated as we get Halifax kicked into high gear, we've highlighted some initiatives that showcase our resiliency and accomplishments.

In August, Statistics Canada released soaring **retail numbers**: an increase of 23.7 per cent to \$53 billion for June sales and revenues. They also revised the numbers for May and showed a gain of 21.2 per cent instead of the originally reported 18.7. This is a tremendous feat for retail in the midst of the pandemic.

Also in August, the Halifax Chamber held its very first in-person event since February. Business After Hours at the Residence Inn by Marriott Halifax Downtown rooftop was a huge success, boasting an attendance of 40 members plus our special guests Mayor Mike Savage and MP Andy Fillmore.

During the event everyone at the event wore masks, social distanced and followed all public health guidelines. We even had a contest for the best mask, and

*"We encourage you to register to vote, and when October arrives, fill out your ballot and vote for your district representative and your mayor."*

our lucky winner received a two-night stay at the Residence Inn by Marriott Halifax Downtown for sporting a fun mask with a strawberry print.

Now that we have our feet wet, we are looking forward to hosting another outdoor **Business After Hours** this month with Business Networking International (BNI) at the Pondsides Amphitheatre in Dartmouth Crossing. Bring your best mask!

There are also more events to look forward to: **Wine on the Waves** on September 18th, **Power Lunch** on September 23rd and the **2020 Chamber Golf Challenge** on October 7th. I can't wait to see more of our members after so many months. We hope you can join us for some outdoor networking on a boat, on the golf course, or at the amphitheatre.

As we move into the fall, to continue supporting our members, the Halifax Chamber is launching a marketing and digitization project with our partners at SimplyCast. We will be offering this new service to our members without subscription costs! Through this new service, they can create simple and sophisticated campaigns to drive

engagement by appealing to their audience's needs with personalized, special content. We will be launching this month and will share further details with you soon.

Halifax is holding a municipal election this fall and to kickstart our usual 'get out and vote' campaign, our cover story for this issue focuses on the mayoral candidates. We encourage you to register to vote, and when October arrives, fill out your ballot and vote for your district representative and your mayor. To help you get to know your candidates, the Halifax Chamber will be hosting webinars with the HRM district candidates leading up to the election. Stay tuned!

This issue also highlights accessibility and the related trends stemming out of 2020's developments. We talked to the Black Business Initiative as well, to get their perspective on the BLM movement protests and the need for racism and Black issues to be front and centre. Don't forget to support local and Black-owned businesses – flip to page 20 to find out how.

Happy reading and, as always, **we're in your corner.**

## CHAMBER CHATS PODCAST



**Check us out!**

From resiliency tales to recovery plans tune in to hear all about it with your host Patrick Sullivan, President and CEO



[halifaxchamber.com/podcast](https://halifaxchamber.com/podcast)

# NEW & NOTED

We welcome our new Chamber members

## 5ELEMENTS-POWERSPORTS. INC.

Established one year ago, 5Elements-Powersports.Inc. is the recipient of the prestigious and exclusive distribution of Clenzoil Marine Products. Owner and Manager Volker Haseidl has 28 years of hands-on experience, expert training and service performance, including diagnostics and repair for Powersports Products. His passion and attention to detail, from the Jet Ski racing scene, fed his desire to create his own company. Its mission is to always create a unique customer experience for ATV and PWC users. The goal is to contribute to repeat and referral customers through strict problem-solving skills. The company is committed to top-quality workmanship and excellent customer service.

### Volker Haseidl

Three Fathom Harbour, NS  
(902) 999-8846

[info@5elements-powersports.com](mailto:info@5elements-powersports.com)  
<http://5Elements-Powersports.com>  
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best trip for you. We provide our clients personal service until they arrive home.

### Elayne Pink

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[epink@absolutetravelspecialists.com](mailto:epink@absolutetravelspecialists.com)  
<http://www.absolutetravelspecialists.com>

TRAVEL & TOURISM - Travel Services

## ALALI'S PAINTING INC.

AlAli's Painting comes to you! Proudly serving all of Nova Scotia, this new company is owned by a Syrian family who came to Chester in 2016. They are professionals at painting on residential and commercial exterior and interior, as well as repairs and renovations. Offering free estimates and flexible payment plans, contact us to learn more!

### Ibrahim AlAli

Western Shore, NS  
(902) 277-2054

[starfishpainters2019@gmail.com](mailto:starfishpainters2019@gmail.com)  
REAL ESTATE/CONSTRUCTION -  
Renovations

## ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE HALIFAX-DARTMOUTH

Alliance Française Halifax is a Canadian not-for-profit association that has been a part of our community since 1903, fostering and supporting French language and Francophone Cultures. Alliance Française Halifax is an expert in teaching French to students of all levels and backgrounds. Online training and classes are available.

### Isabelle Pedot

5509 Young St  
Halifax, NS  
(902) 455-4411

[Isabelle.pedot@afhalifax.ca](mailto:Isabelle.pedot@afhalifax.ca)  
<http://www.afhalifax.ca>

EDUCATION & PROF.  
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## WANT TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS?

BECOME PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER.  
1,700 MEMBERS STRONG



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so you can re-invest in  
your business.



**FREE EXPOSURE**  
in the magazine, on social media,  
in the e-newsletter, and more!



**ADVOCACY**  
to all levels of government



**MEET THE COMMUNITY**  
and make important connections

JOIN THE HALIFAX CHAMBER!

[HALIFAXCHAMBER.COM](http://HALIFAXCHAMBER.COM)

WHERE SHOULD I START?

### CHAMBER 101

- Monthly info session
- Learn how to increase earnings while reducing your costs
- Lunch is on us!



**HALIFAX  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE**

We're in your corner.

To register:  
[Cindy@halifaxchamber.com](mailto:Cindy@halifaxchamber.com)

**CHAMPION FOUNDATIONAL CHANGE AGENCY**

As a Professional business performance consultant, I am committed to offering you and your team practical and innovative tools that will foster positive behavioural changes that lead to optimal performance. Specializing in workplace wellness solutions and programs to organizations. Mental, physical and emotional wellness for greater productivity, retention and performance excellence.

**Ann-Marie Flinn**

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[info@changechamp.ca](mailto:info@changechamp.ca)  
<http://www.changechamp.ca>  
BUSINESS & PROF. SERVICES -  
Business Consulting

**CUSTOMER CAMP**

At Customer Camp, we believe that whoever gets closer to the customer wins. Our workshops and market research services help growth-ready product teams to get focused and market smarter. Stop guessing. Start growing.

**Katelyn Bourgoin**

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[kbo@customercamp.co](mailto:kbo@customercamp.co)  
<http://www.customercamp.co>  
EDUCATION & PROF.  
DEVELOPMENT - E-Learning

**EAST PEAK INDOOR CLIMBING**

Reach new heights at East Peak Climbing, Halifax's largest indoor climbing facility inside the historic Oxford Theatre building. We offer a wide range of routes suited for climbers of all levels and all ages including bouldering, top rope, and lead climbing. Whether you're a seasoned climber or just starting out, we've got a peak for you!

**Jackie Turner**

6408 Quinpool Rd  
Halifax, NS  
(902) 428-0043  
[jackie@eastpeakclimbing.ca](mailto:jackie@eastpeakclimbing.ca)  
<https://eastpeakclimbing.ca>  
SPORTS & RECREATION -

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**IGNITE ALLIANCES**

Ignite Alliances Corp works closely with clients to provide the necessary tools to successfully run a business. By partnering with global industry leaders, Ignite provides advanced technology solutions through collaboration and security services. Ignite strives to connect people and ideas through technology and help businesses manage security risks by becoming cyber resilient. Through both collaboration and security services, Ignite works with clients every step of the way to ensure project success.

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[lesek.demont@ignitecsg.com](mailto:lesek.demont@ignitecsg.com)  
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COMPUTERS, IT & TECHNOLOGY -  
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**IMMEDIAC WORLDWIDE INC.**

Since 1998 immediaC has delivered more than 4,500 custom websites, web applications and mobile applications, more professional web designs than any other company in Canada. immediaC's customers include the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Registered Nurses Professional Development, Canoe Kayak Canada, Massage Addicts, and many other well known local businesses. immediaC the Friendly. Web. Experts.

**John Leahy**

200 - 6239 Quinpool Rd  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
(902) 491-4485  
[jleahy@immediaC.com](mailto:jleahy@immediaC.com)  
<http://www.immediaC.com>  
ADVERTISING, PR & MEDIA -  
Internet Marketing

**KORR INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY COMPANY**

Having just worked 7 1/2 years in the heavy truck and trailer industry, Kelly McCallum (with his business partner/wife Jill) have taken on a new venture as the Distributor for the Titan forklift brand in Atlantic Canada. We look forward to providing customers with material handling solutions in the Maritimes.

**Kelly McCallum**

Elmsdale, NS  
(902) 943-6538  
[KORRIndustrial@gmail.com](mailto:KORRIndustrial@gmail.com)  
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<http://www.renewly.ca>

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT - Energy  
Consulting

**THE EASTERN SHORES GALLERY**

The Eastern Shores Gallery promotes the art of 22 artists from Chezzetcook to 100 Islands with an emphasis on appreciating the shorelife, wildness and solitude of the East Coast. Ceramics, wood, photography, paintings, stained glass, fabric and garden planters and furniture.

Come visit the Eastern Shore and take a memory home!

**Anthea Taljaard (Van Der Pluym)**

9042 Highway 7 Trunk  
Head of Jeddore, NS  
(902) 414-6117

[anthea@antheavanderpluym.com](mailto:anthea@antheavanderpluym.com)

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COMPUTERS, IT & TECHNOLOGY -  
Computer Software

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WCS Canopy is a provider of various styles and sizes of pop up tents. We can provide stock colours or full custom digitally printed tents. We also do rollup banners, flags of all shapes and sizes, banners of various types. Contact

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<http://www.wcscanopy.com>

ADVERTISING, PR & MEDIA -  
Displays

**Are you a new member?**

To submit your 50-word description for New & Noted, please contact Mandi Boswer, Administrative Assistant at [Mandi@halifaxchamber.com](mailto:Mandi@halifaxchamber.com) or 902-468-7111 within the first six months of membership.



**CHAMBER | GOLF CHALLENGE**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7**

Glen Arbour Golf Course  
40 Club House Ln, Hammonds Plains



[www.HALIFAXCHAMBER.com](http://www.HALIFAXCHAMBER.com)

# MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

How our members are growing Halifax

## THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HELPS GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES PUT BUSINESS IDEAS INTO ACTION

The Government of Canada, through the **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)**, is contributing \$958,865 to the Nova Scotia Association of CBDCs to deliver the province-wide Spark Innovation Challenge over the next two years. The **Spark Innovation Challenge** offers early-stage seed financing for new technology start-ups in rural areas of Nova Scotia. ACOA is also providing nearly \$3.3 million to Nova Scotia's network of Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) to cover operating costs related to the delivery of the **Community Futures Program**, which provides small business loans, tools, training and events for people who want to start, expand, franchise or sell a business. These investments further demonstrate the Government of Canada's commitment to supporting Atlantic businesses through this difficult time.

## N.S. GOVERNMENT SELLS LISCOMBE LODGE RESORT TO PRIVATE OPERATOR

The Nova Scotia government has sold Liscombe Lodge to a private operator, officially ending its role in the resort business. The province announced that it has sold the resort about 170 kilometres east of Halifax to **Hearthstone Hospitality Ltd.** for \$450,000. The new owner has agreed to invest \$1 million in upgrades and offer employment to all current employees at the Guysborough County property. The sale closed Aug. 1. Hearthstone currently operates three hotels in Nova Scotia in Port Hastings, Sydney and Dartmouth.



## LOCAL COMPANIES TEAM UP TO PROVIDE MASK OPTIONS FOR NOVA SCOTIANS OF ALL AGES

Ahead of the July 31st requirement, Halifax graphic design business **Pixels & Pieces** has partnered with Stubbs Design to offer Nova Scotians both cotton and ARMABREATH™ mask options for adults and kids. ARMABREATH™ is a new microfiber fabric that has enhanced filtration that blocks out 90+ per cent of particles. Trotec (the fabric distributor) has relationships with local makers across Canada, like

Amy Harrison of Pixels & Pieces Design, which allows them to get ARMABREATH™ to smaller markets throughout the country. Their network of cutters and sewing machine operators produce high quality sewn goods in Nova Scotia and are helping to bring garment manufacturing back to Canada. Stubbs makes the cotton masks and Pixels & Pieces supplies the washable ARMABREATH™ filter.

## MARTHA CASEY NAMED AS NEW VOLTA CEO

Martha was **Volta's** COO and interim CEO and recently removed "interim", becoming the new Chief Executive Office of Volta, Halifax. Martha is also a Board member at the Halifax Chamber. Before joining Volta, Martha was the Chief of Staff and Executive Director in the President's Office at Dalhousie University. She also worked in New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration over two terms before returning to live in Halifax. Martha has held leadership

roles in organizational change, project oversight and economic development. Before joining the Mayor's Office, Martha worked on projects with the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight and the Office of the Public Advocate. She volunteered with a number of organizations aimed at building confidence and competence in girls, supporting new immigrants' entry to the workforce, and economic capacity building.

**MCINNES COOPER COMMITS AT MCINNES COOPER TOWER - PURDY'S WHARF**

McInnes Cooper is pleased to announce its continued commitment to Purdy's Wharf on the Halifax Waterfront. The decision to extend the firm's lease beyond 2030 with landlord, GWL Realty Advisors, will also see the tower (the firm occupies) renamed "McInnes Cooper Tower - Purdy's Wharf". Purdy's Wharf is an iconic part of the capital's striking skyline. It will benefit in the future from close proximity to Granville Park and the new neighbourhood born from the Cogswell District Redevelopment Project. Available tenant amenities such as onsite covered parking, access to transit, childcare and gym facilities are just some of the reasons McInnes Cooper is excited to continue its tenure at the Purdy's Wharf complex overlooking the Halifax Harbour.

**AMOS PEWTER RAISES FUNDS FOR IWK AUXILIARY - CRUISE PAVILION PARTNER**

Key Auxiliary fundraising efforts, including the operation of the Biggs and Littles Gift Shoppe at the IWK and the **Amos Pewter** kiosk at the Cruise Pavilion, were greatly affected this year. This Spring, Amos Pewter Lead Designer David Christoffel took to social media with a behind-the-scenes series of "At the Jeweler's Bench" videos that feature a new design called The Hug Pocket Charm. With the cancellation of this year's cruise ship season, Amos Pewter saw an opportunity for The Hug to help with Auxiliary fundraising. Amos Pewter will donate the proceeds of the new pewter Hug Pocket Charm to the IWK Auxiliary from sales at their waterfront stores in Mahone Bay, Halifax, Peggy's Cove and Charlottetown as well as on-line at [amospewter.com](http://amospewter.com).



**RIDE FOR CANCER CREATES NEW CHALLENGE: #RIDETOAMILLION**

This year, there's a new exciting challenge from **Ride for Cancer powered by BMO Bank of Montreal** to make the biggest impact in the organization's history. The #RidetoaMillion challenge introduces 2020 KitUp Challenge rewards consisting of exclusive Ride For Cancer attire to wear during

the event on Oct. 3. The challenge has four tiers for rewards. Check out this [page](#) for more details. The organization is also offering a **toolkit** to help participants get to the start-line. It's a collection of resources, graphics, tips and templates to help riders reach their goals.

**EFFICIENCYONE WELCOMES FATEN ALSHAZLY TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

William Lahey, Chair of the Board of Directors for **EfficiencyOne** and President and Vice-Chancellor of University of King's College, welcomes Faten Alshazly as new Board member. Faten is the Principal and Chief Creative Officer of **WeUsThem INC.** and a powerhouse for clients as well as a tireless champion of the communities she serves every day. EfficiencyOne is a leader in the design and delivery of resources-efficiency programs and services for homes, businesses and large industrial customers.





**NUTRI-LAWN STAFF APPRECIATION DAY**

This spring our team exceeded expectations, including working extra hours, embracing our COVID-19 protocol and in some cases working from home for 3.5 months. We celebrated with a staff appreciation day! **Nutri-Lawn** is

dedicated to becoming Canada’s leading lawn care company that cares about people and inspires them to grow and move forward. At Nutri-Lawn, “we nourish lawns and lives.”

**CPHR NOVA SCOTIA TEAM HAS GROWN!**



Welcome Ashley Hollet, our new Marketing and Events Manager. Ashley has a diploma with honours in Special Events Management from George Brown College, in addition to an extensive background in hospitality and customer service. Ashley is excited to bring her talent, creativity and industry experience to **CPHR Nova Scotia** and looks forward to connecting with all of our amazing members. Ashley has already offered us an increase in membership engagement through creative marketing and innovative events. In her spare time, she can be found travelling (within the Atlantic Bubble for now), hosting and cooking for family and friends, or perusing Pinterest for her next DIY project.

**ESNS EXPANDS THE NEXT STEP PROGRAM**

**Easter Seals NS's** New Leaf Enterprises recently launched and expanded The Next Step program. It now includes a classroom component focusing on professional development and certification followed by employment support in a job placement. New Leaf has been at the forefront of providing employment support for persons with disabilities for years. This program offers individualized solutions to youth from age 18 to 30 with different abilities. We believe in a world where everyone is included. The need for secure, stable employment is just as important for persons with disabilities as it is for anyone else. If your business is hiring, please contact **Carlton Macdonald** or call 902-453-6000 ext 240.



## MEET

## YOUR 2020 MAYORAL CANDIDATES

By Mina Atia

“We don’t want COVID-19 to diminish the importance of hearing from our Mayoral candidates.” — **Kathleen MacEachern**,  
Policy Analyst, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

**Kathleen MacEachern:** The Halifax Chamber of Commerce has and will continue to promote the importance of voting. Whether in federal, provincial, or municipal elections, it is our right to vote and truly a privilege to have the opportunity to express our opinion through the ballot box. This year, while voting in the Halifax Regional Municipality election will still occur, the run-up to the election might look a little different.

We don’t want COVID-19 to diminish the importance of hearing from our Mayoral candidates. Learning more about their reasons for running, their plans for the future, and of course how they, as Mayor, will help our greatly impacted business community. That is why we recently reached out to both candidates, current Mayor Savage and Councillor Matt Whitman, to ask them the questions we know matter to you.

With eight years of experience, Mayor Savage hopes to continue the growth of Halifax that he and the councillors have been able to secure. Increasing immigration, protecting our environment, and affordable housing are priorities, along with tackling the big issue of poverty in our city. In his time as mayor, Mr. Savage is incredibly proud to say that (pre-COVID) HRM was the strongest economy in our country!

Councillor Matt Whitman is ready to lead. He believes that his background and years of experience filled with passion and energy for the municipality are what he will bring to the position of Mayor. Mr. Whitman will help ensure taxpayer's dollars are invested wisely while focusing on supporting local and ensuring we remain fiscally viable.

The candidates had a lot more to say about campaigning for mayor. Have a read of their responses to our questions for a glimpse into their campaign. Once again, we want to remind our readers, members, and the community to Get Out and Vote on October 17!

*We spoke to Mayor Savage over the phone on Aug. 20, 2020*

### Why should residents of HRM vote for you?

I’ve shown strong and mature leadership in the city. I represent the city well. I work well with my wonderful Council staff, major community organizations and other orders of government in the community. I also work well with people. They know I have a good sense of the city and I can lead in a positive direction. Overall, I provided strong leadership for the city and I will continue to do that.

### What has changed the most in the municipality during your term?

Eight years ago, the council at the time was dysfunctional. Between the mayor, councillors and staff as well, there was virtually no development happening in the city. So the core of the city, or growth, was stagnant. Our population was not growing, and big decisions were being pushed down the road.

Now, we've had the strongest economy in the country for the last four years.

Our population is growing at a record pace. We're becoming more diverse as a city. You could walk down the streets of Halifax and hear languages you wouldn't recognize,

## MIKE SAVAGE

which was very unusual 10 years ago. We're also investing in big projects for the environment. We're investing and protecting green space for generations. These are all things we take for granted but they didn't exist eight years ago.

There has been a very positive change in the city. I'm very proud of that and pleased to evolve Halifax. We're in a much better city than we were eight years ago.

### What is your proud accomplishment?

There is a number of things that make me very excited. We're hitting our growth targets.

# MIKE SAVAGE



“A country such as Canada and a city that's doing as well as we're doing, tackling poverty in a meaningful way, tackling social exclusion, tackling food insecurity and housing affordability are really important issues.”

— Mayor Mike Savage



Our population has grown by between 25 and 30 thousand people and I'm proud of the fact that there are people coming here from around the world.

There were people I talked to who didn't even know what Halifax was, when I was first elected. Now, they're coming here to go to school, to invest or find places to visit.

I'm proud of the positive growth of the city and we're making sure our growth is sustainable both from a social point of view and an environmental one.

I'm proud of the council working well together for the last number of years. We haven't had as much dysfunction in the council and it hasn't really been talked about. My particular style of leadership is what I'm really proud of.

## How would you describe your opponent in this race?

I've been in seven or eight elections, I never said negative things about opponents and I'm not going to start now. There's only one opponent so far, and Councillor Whitman is energetic and ambitious.

## Is there a topic you wish people were

## talking about more in this election?

I haven't been campaigning and this election starts after Labor Day. So it's hard to say what the big issues are. However, I think one of them is the housing market. It's something people are talking about in the community. I don't know what those discussions are, but we need more housing or affordable housing options.

Again, when I was elected and developers started to build in the city, people used to question where the people are coming from for those developments and that we don't need them. Now the question is exactly the opposite. We need more places for people to live in and let's get some built. I think housing is an important issue.

I also think poverty overall never gets discussed. It was the case when I was a member of parliament, there wasn't a lot of work on poverty. Poverty hasn't been as much of a voting issue as it should be.

A country such as Canada and a city that's doing as well as we're doing, tackling poverty in a meaningful way, tackling social exclusion, tackling food insecurity and housing affordability are really important issues.

## How has COVID-19 impacted your aspirations for HRM going forward?

COVID-19 has thrown the world for a loop. There has been a movement in the last couple of years about the mid-sized city and the attraction of a mid-size city like Halifax.

I think COVID has shown people you don't need to go to the office; you could work from home and you can work from anywhere.

You don't need to pay \$4,000 worth of rent in Toronto and you don't need to fight the Toronto traffic. Halifax has a beautiful downtown and has many cool neighbourhoods. You can work from downtown or in a county half an hour away within large and small communities, through a rural or suburban component.

Halifax has a lot to offer. Companies have come to Halifax even during COVID. They've been looking at many locations but ended up coming down here to start businesses. We're going to continue to grow.

With that being said, first let's not be isolationist. Let's not reduce our commitment to immigration and international students. Let's recognize the growth. Let's follow all the protocols around



## MIKE SAVAGE

COVID-19, but let's not be insular in our thinking.

Second, let's recognize the strengths of Halifax. It makes us really attractive and the way we have handled COVID as a province is even more sellable.

Finding a good place to do business is going to help us long term. COVID has been tough on a lot of people, businesses and organizations. But we have to make sure we learn the lessons and come out stronger than ever.

**Businesses were greatly impacted and continue to be impacted by COVID-19, what will you do as Mayor to help them through?**

First of all, as a city, we have to recognize those things we can do and the things we cannot do.

What we can do is manage the tax rate. Our tax rate this year was 1.4%, if not the lowest of any major city in Canada.

We can manage our affairs in an appropriate way. We cut our budgets, and in some cases it hurts. We try to maintain essential services and programs that people need. The first thing to do in a crisis is to be responsible with the money that the people had to procure and businesses have given you.

We are working with individuals and businesses who can't pay their property taxes, to see if we can come up with a plan that allows them to pay and/or to further deduct in a sensible way.

Second, there are sectors in our community that are absolutely pulverized by COVID. The hospitality and tourism industry is one. I've tried to spend a lot of time with Pat Sullivan at the Chamber, the Halifax partnership, the hotel association and the restaurant associations to find out what we can do to help.

For example, we made patios free. We've extended streets and closed streets to traffic so businesses have a better chance to bring

more people in.

There's an advocacy piece here. I've worked very closely with the provincial government, as well as the federal government to urge support for those sectors who have been most dramatically hurt. The federal government has done a tremendous amount of investment for people in the hospitality industry.

I think all parts of government have to work together and in some cases we may have to accept the fact that we have to be part of the solution.

The other industry is the arts and culture. It has been really destroyed. Neptune Theatre is not going to have a season this year. There are tons of great artists who haven't brought in any income from their profession.

As a city, and as a leader, we need to make sure we work with them to help. We need to work with their business improvement district and make sure its resources are supported throughout this difficult time.

# MATT WHITMAN



CONTRIBUTED

*"I'm not a career politician. I will meddle in every department to ensure taxpayer dollars are invested wisely and that taxpayer priorities are HRM Council's priorities."*

—Matt Whitman, HRM13  
Regional Councillor, Halifax

*We reached Councillor Whitman via email*

## Why should residents of HRM vote for you?

Thanks to a 28-year career in finance, legal and technology – including eight years as an HRM Regional Councillor – I not only have the background and experience to lead HRM but the passion, energy and love for this great municipality!

I've seen first-hand what works and what doesn't. I've listened to residents' priorities and I have the skills to guide us out of the pandemic through smart spending and tough choices.

## What's changed the most in your district since 2016?

My specific district, District 13, continues to grow and experience the benefit of being beautiful and a great place to live, work and play but also the challenges of needing more City Hall infrastructure and value to taxpayers for their tax dollar.

I'm a Regional Councillor and make decisions in all 16 districts and need to represent all of HRM in partnership with my Council colleagues.

## Why did you decide to run for Mayor?

After eight years as a Council member, I've seen what works well and what needs help. HRM taxpayers deserve better value for their tax dollars. Spending needs to be prioritized and Council should not pander to get projects and expensive items that don't deliver value for the taxpayer.

## How would you describe your opponent in this race?

Mike is a friend, and he's been a mentor at times. We have a mutual respect for each other. We've voted together on many issues, but the CFL stadium, History & Heritage, smoking ban, bike lanes, bloated staffing levels, Halifax branding in Dartmouth, Cornwallis removal and UBER delays are all differentiations between us.

## How will your leadership differ from Mayor Mike Savage's?

Mike plays it safe. He's been described as laid back, sitting on the fence, fun, even a "coaster". I'm not a career politician. I will meddle in every department to ensure taxpayer dollars are invested wisely and that taxpayer priorities are HRM Council's priorities.

## What are some of your concerns about the Halifax Regional Municipality and the issues it's facing?

HRM is booming, even during COVID. But we need to spend wisely to protect taxpayers. Tough times lay ahead. We are impacted by external issues and global markets. We need to spend wisely. Housing affordability is a key area where HRM can do better by working with the Provincial and Federal Government.

## How has being on council prepared you?

I've been in on all the important conversations. I'm very aware of the

important issues and taxpayer priorities. I show up and speak up. I don't sit on the fence or coast. I'm prepared to guide HRM through the next eight years.

## What have you learned from being a councillor that will apply if you become Mayor?

The key is to focus on taxpayer priorities. Spend wisely. Deliver value to residents and businesses for every tax dollar invested.

## What is going to be the biggest challenge?

Post COVID, HRM will feel the financial pain for years to come. We can't spend our way out of this pandemic. We need to watch every nickel, dime and quarter.

## Has COVID-19 impacted your aspirations for HRM going forward?

I'd like to see HRM think and act more locally. Not focus so much on our international brand, but rather focus on our local businesses, citizens and most vulnerable population.

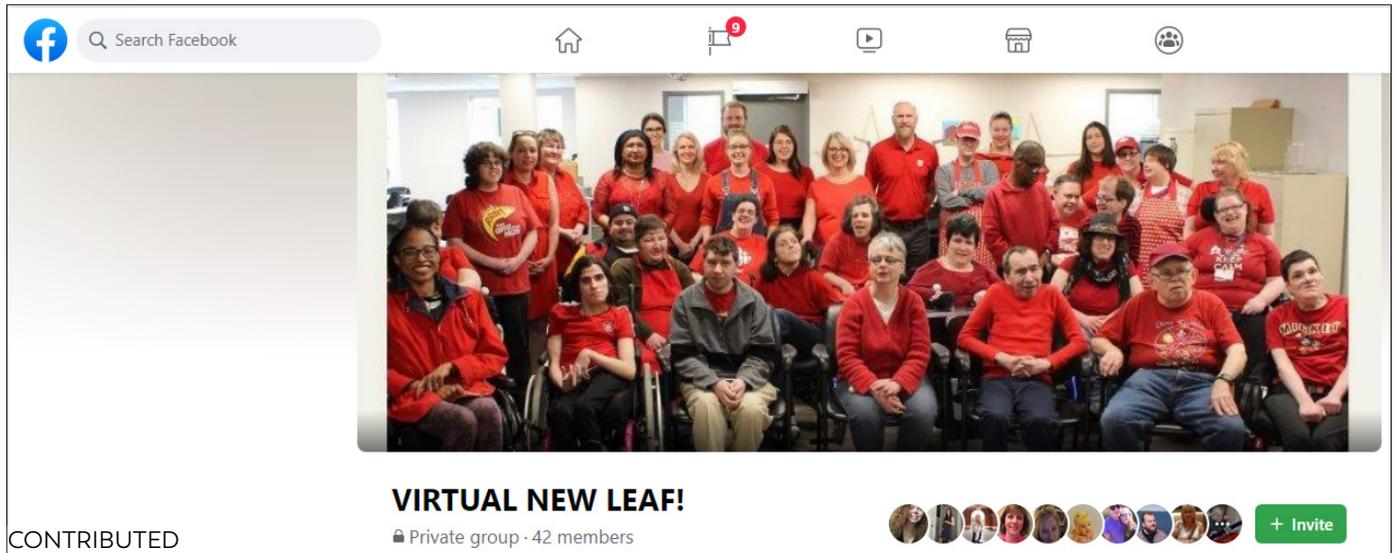
## Businesses were greatly impacted and continue to be impacted by COVID-19, what will you do as Mayor to help them through?

I will continue to listen and work with the business improvement groups, including the Chamber, implement smart business, and advice and reduce red tape to make life easier for businesses to thrive in HRM. ■

# Accessibility goes digital

Examining accessibility needs beyond physical access

By Mina Atia



CONTRIBUTED

## VIRTUAL NEW LEAF!

Private group · 42 members



+ Invite

The World Health Organization estimates more than one billion people globally live with a disability. As we learn more about how we can support approximately one in seven of our entire population, digital access is at the forefront of the accessibility conversation.

In 2006, more than 170 countries signed [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\)](#), which requires countries to identify obstacles and eliminate barriers of information and communications technologies.

“Things are getting less accessible overall because of the way websites are being designed today,” says Lisa Snider, Senior Digital Accessibility Consultant, Trainer and Owner of [Access Changes Everything](#), a Canadian digital accessibility consulting company.

“There was a major study done of about a million website homepages across the world, and 98 per cent of them still had basic accessibility issues.”

A website checker for accessibility called WebAim conducted an [analysis](#) of the world’s top homepages for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ([WCAG](#)) 2.1 (WCAG is the ISO Standard for digital accessibility). It covers a wide range of recommendations for accessibility to

*Things are getting less accessible overall because of the way websites are being designed today.”*

— Lisa Snider,  
Senior Digital  
Accessibility Consultant,  
Trainer and Owner  
of Access Changes  
Everything

help people with disabilities access web content on several devices.

The first check in 2019 found 97.8 per cent of the websites tested had accessibility issues. Interestingly (and disappointingly), a second test in 2020 found 98.1 per cent of the websites had accessibility issues.

“We’re going backwards in some ways, but the good news is that the legislation in Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, soon to be New Brunswick, BC and the federal government’s Accessibility Act are helping us, because people are becoming more aware of what is needed,” says Snider.

According to Statistics Canada, about 19 per cent of Nova Scotians (ages 15 and older) identify as having a disability, which amounts to approximately 144,000 people, or 1 in 5. This percentage will increase to 25 per cent by 2030.

“There already was a push for making workplaces, public spaces, educational spaces, and every aspect of how an able bodied person lives in Nova Scotia, more accessible for persons with disabilities,” says Joanne Bernard, President and CEO of [Easter Seals Nova Scotia](#).

In 2017, Nova Scotia passed the Accessibility Act and became the third

province to adopt the legislation. The goal is for Nova Scotia to be accessible by 2030 by putting the law into practice, addressing issues related to accessibility and disability.

An Accessibility Advisory Board was also formed to inform the government on the development of the accessibility standards accordingly, with the majority of board members being persons with disabilities (PWDs).

“In my experience, because I work with clients all over Canada and in the States, Nova Scotia has been the top in terms of people wanting to know how to make things accessible,” says Snider.

Many of the issues found by the WebAim checker are basic ones, such as poor colour contrast or no alternative text for people who are blind, Deaf-Blind or low vision.

“For our social media now, we make sure to use pictures, larger font, contrasting colours and special texts so that the screen reader could describe the picture

that's being used,” says Bernard.

“Whenever those are available, we make sure they're utilized properly.”

However, the WebAim checker used for this study can't check all of the WCAG guidelines. It only checks a few of them. On top of that, the WCAG ISO Standard doesn't cover everything and doesn't include checking for colour blindness or standards that can help people with cognitive, neurological, intellectual and learning disabilities.

Accessibility advocates are calling for more forms of testing and standardizing and a comprehensive improvement of PWDs' user experience.

“We can never get anything 100% accessible, because we're human,” says Snider. “Humans have different needs, we want to get everything as accessible as possible for most people, but then other people will present other needs. We then provide possible different options.”

The WCAG 2.1 recommendations revolve

around artificial intelligence, robotics and machine learning as emerging technologies and the role they potentially play in improving the lives of PWDs.

Engaging PWDs and increasing their capacity is not only an accessibility issue, it's key to closing the employment gap and including everyone in the workforce.

“We're unique in a way that we have a broad range of lifestyles in mobility and accessibility programs that really have been created to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia,” says Bernard.

For business implementation and sustainability purposes, organizations need to develop their operational plans and move forward with the accessibility initiative.

“When business is having to do more online, it can be a business's lifeline,” says Snider. “It can be either sink or swim.”

Digital accessibility also includes the consumer and user experience, whereas WCAG 2.1 plays a part in standardizing the digital-content compliance. But it's not to the fullest extent.

“It's getting better, and it's helping. But there's still a long way to go,” says Snider.

While the digital divide is rearing its head with the tremendous uptake of online resources (a result of the pandemic), digital accessibility is becoming increasingly essential.

“The pandemic has highlighted the inequalities for persons with disabilities,” says Bernard. “It shined a spotlight on the effects of everything from isolation, to transportation, to communication, and just to the programs that are available for persons with disabilities.”

A reinforcement of the need for accessibility to include effective use of products, devices, services and/or environment is now crucial. And with such a need comes a new wave of tools to push for an accessible world.

“Digital accessibility is something that we are very cognizant of,” says Bernard. “During the pandemic when everyone



*We're unique in a way that we have a broad range of lifestyles in mobility and accessibility programs that really have been created to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia.”*

— Joanne Bernard, President and CEO of Easter Seals Nova Scotia

was home, we did a virtual New Leaf and were able to have access through Facebook.”

The leadership of **New Leaf Enterprises**, Easer Seals Nova Scotia’s social enterprise that supports PWDs, was able to host live music, yoga and cooking classes and trivia games on Facebook for the majority of Easer Seals’ clients. It was a fantastic way for the staff to engage the clients fully, yet virtually. It also kept the clients engaged through their usual programs to help alleviate their isolation trouble.

“It was a tremendous success for us that previously had never been done,” says Bernard. “Under the pandemic and with the cancellation of AccessAbility Week, the virtual New Leaf and our ability to reach out to our clients basically just soared.”

National AccessAbility Week (**NAAW**) is a celebration of the valuable contributions of Canadian PWDs. It’s also an opportunity to recognize the efforts of individuals, communities and workplaces actively working to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion.

This year, AccessAbility Week was held from May 31 to June 6, but it was shifted to a virtual celebration to reflect public health instructions.

“It’s really a celebration of what we do with our internal programs and what we strive to do with our employment program, which is connecting folks with disabilities and mental illness to the workplace,” says Liam O’Rourke, Executive Director of **LakeCity Works**.

AccessAbility Week showcases that by increasing accessibility for PWDs, they can in turn participate in all social ventures, fulfill employment needs, access resources and services, and successively enrich the Canadian economy.

At a more dire level of accessibility needs, one in every 10 Canadian households don’t have access to internet. This inequity is even more prevalent amongst PWDs.

“We’re a medium sized non-profit in Dartmouth, and we don’t have the budget to fund internet access,” says O’Rourke.



*“It’s really a celebration of what we do with our internal programs and what we strive to do with our employment program, which is connecting folks with disabilities and mental illness to the workplace.”*

— Liam O’Rourke, Executive Director of LakeCity Works

The federal government announced back in June a \$1.7 billion Universal Broadband Fund to provide internet access, lower its costs and increase the speed. But there’s yet to be any development on the fund or how it’s going to move forward to secure optimum internet access for all.

“Until we have that sort of universal access issue addressed, we can’t run all the online workshops or access online job fairs,” says O’Rourke. “So if people with disabilities can’t access it, then it’s a moot point.”

The availability of affordable, high-speed internet access is the first step towards a levelled accessibility for all.

Once secured, organizations need to look at accessibility beyond the physical approach.

“Remember your digital presence as well: your websites, your documents and your videos, especially during COVID,” says Snider.

Accessibility is everyone’s fight. If Nova Scotia plans to be accessible by 2030, then all individuals and organizations need to work together to find and implement solutions.

“Fight to be curious and find out more,” says Snider. **“It’s not just doors and washrooms.”** ■

# BBI DRIVING BLACK BUSINESS GROWTH AND EXCELLENCE

BY MINA ATIA



CONTRIBUTED

**A**t a time where systemic racism is finally in the spotlight, Black businesses are building thriving long-term relationships with the broader business community.

There's a concern that non-black consumers and businesses slowly stop committing to supporting Black business long term after crises subside.

"Therein lies the problem; we would challenge you to ask yourself 'why not'," says Lydia Phillip, Training & Communications Manager at The Black Business Initiative (BBI).

"As champions and advocates for Black-owned businesses, we would be doing our clients a disservice by not challenging the inherent systemic bias of this assumption that supporting Black-owned is a trend or a charitable act," she says.

BBI is a business development organization dedicated to supporting Black-owned businesses in Nova Scotia.

Launched in 1996, the organization works with Black Nova Scotian businesses to drive their growth and overcome challenges uniquely inherent to Black Nova Scotians.

Focused on impacting the social and economic wellbeing of the province, BBI provides entrepreneurial training, partnership building with the business community, business consulting and access to financing.

Through these initiatives, the growth of a stronger Black presence in Nova Scotia's business community is steadfast.

"We act as a catalyst for job creation, equitable participation and advancing the economic prosperity of Nova Scotia," says Phillip.

There's an undeniable excellence in Black-owned businesses. It's apparent in the quality of their products, fantastic services and tremendous professionalism.

"The fact that Bin Doctor, an

environmental company, or Sure Shot Dispensing, a gold standard manufacturing company, and many others can thrive in these tough times is proof of the calibre of many of Nova Scotia's Black-owned companies," says Phillip.

The **BBI Black Business Directory** provides Black business owners with free exposure, as well as resources and information for organizations in the public sector that offer entrepreneurial support. This business directory is a great tool when looking for local, Black-owned businesses offering high-quality products and services.

By connecting Black-owned business with provincial and federal support, BBI was able to help entrepreneurs and provide them with proper consultations throughout the pandemic.

"We now shift into anticipated recovery and are supporting Black-owned companies as they begin to open their doors again," says Phillip.

BBI is instrumental in the success of multiple enterprises pertinent to the development of the Black community and growth of Black businesses.

It supported the refit and modernization of the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia, the construction of the Black Loyalist Heritage Museum, rebuilding of Africville Church, the creation of Hope Blooms and the African Nova Scotia Music Association.

“We have seen tremendous momentum from our youth-centered charitable initiative, Business Is Jammin’ (BIJ), which empowers Black youth through the facilitation of programs supporting and encouraging youth to meet their full potential,” says Phillip.

In the last decade, **BIJ** has helped inspire thousands of program participants to stay in school, start up their own ventures and bring an exceptional level of professionalism to any workplace.

"Black youth who are interested in pursuing business, entrepreneurship and or social enterprise as a career option need experiences, relationships and opportunities," says Ashley Hill, Business Is Jammin’ Manager.

**“***We act as a catalyst for job creation, equitable participation and advancing the economic prosperity of Nova Scotia.***”**

— **Lydia Phillip,**  
Training & Communications Manager,  
The Black Business Initiative

"They need to access mentors, establish connections and have the opportunity to develop their skills."

BIJ was also the Charity of Choice at the Halifax Chamber of Commerce’s 2019 Fall Dinner, supported by Stewart McKelvey, where they told their story to an audience of over 800.

BBI has organized Black Business Summits and other forums such as the 23 sector roundtables and trade missions for construction, music, Women in Business and cultural tourism, on top of contributing to 71 published magazines (including this one) to showcase Black entrepreneurs and business success.

During the last weekend of Re-open City (the Halifax support-local initiative), the North End Business Association organized a Black-business takeover of Gottingen Street.

**Taking BLK Gottingen** gave the opportunity to the storefronts on the street to allow Black businesses to operate within their establishments. It was very well received and so successful that it's being held on a reoccurring basis.



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**I would encourage leaders in the business community to get involved and participate in BIJ's mentorship project, offer job shadowing opportunities, but most importantly share your story with youth."**

**— Ashley Hill,**  
Manager, Business is Jammin'

That was just one way for the community to support Black businesses. However, the business community in particular can go further in its support by buying, hiring, subcontracting, using services by, joining venture support and adding Black-owned businesses to their supply chain.

"Enabling the exposure for Black entrepreneurs by connecting them with opportunities, industry mentorship, or introduction to new markets is also beneficial," says Phillip.

"The business community should champion and advocate for Black-owned businesses to help grow awareness. Explore how your business or organization can partner or collaborate with Black-owned businesses," she says.

On other fronts, businesses can create internship opportunities to Black students, diversify their senior management teams and boards, and donate to organizations working with Black and racialized communities during crises and year-round.

"I would encourage leaders in the business

community to get involved and participate in BIJ's mentorship project, offer job shadowing opportunities, but most importantly share your story with youth," says Hill.

"Let them know that success is possible for them, no matter what their circumstances."

Businesses can set up fundraisers, allocate a portion of sales during times of need to those organizations and engage with Black businesses in mutually beneficial and long-lasting relationships that continue even after times of crisis.

"We continue to support and grow awareness for Black entrepreneurs, both start-ups and mature businesses, in the province," says Phillip. "And we implore the general business community to explore how they can make a positive impact."

Check out the **BBI Black Business Directory** to find, support and employ Black-owned businesses in Nova Scotia. ■

# Marco keeps clients coming back

The Atlantic-based company maintains its highly esteemed position across Canada

By Mina Atia



As the largest Atlantic-based general contractor company, Marco Group Limited has developed a national presence. When doing business either locally or nationally, Marco proudly displays the moniker “Builders of Atlantic Canada” along with its name.

“We thrive in one of the toughest, most demanding environments in the world because we demand as much from ourselves as the wind, weather, and waves of the North Atlantic region demand from those who build in it,” says Allan MacIntosh, President and Co-Owner of the Marco Group.

For almost 20 years, MacIntosh has been serving at Marco. An Architectural Technologist, Professional Quantity Surveyor and Gold Seal Construction Professional, MacIntosh has more than 30 years of experience in the construction industry, both in Nova Scotia and across Canada.

Having to compete with large national

*“We have not forgotten what it means to work in Atlantic Canada and how blessed we are to be able to do what we love to do every day in this region.”*

— Allan MacIntosh,  
President & Co-Owner,  
Marco Group Limited

construction companies, Marco has been able to maintain its enviable and unique position in the industry. The group worked tirelessly over the past few decades to create personal connections and relationships with its clients.

“We have not forgotten what it means to work in Atlantic Canada and how blessed we are to be able to do what we love to do every day in this region,” says MacIntosh.

The group prides itself on being flexible in its operations. Its system is less rigid than those of national firms – it can modify delivery approach and customize its levels of service for each client according to their risk appetite and in-house skill sets.

“Our clients know they have access to me and our senior management team 24/7, and there are no layers of hierarchy or departmental red tape to get through to or reach a decision maker.”

Alongside Marco’s easily accessible staff, the clients take comfort in the fact that it’s large enough to attract the best

designers and subtrades. Marco has the processes and financial strength to deliver any project on time, on budget and of the highest quality.

“We pride ourselves on repeat business and client referrals,” says MacIntosh. “There is nothing better than knowing you are a trusted partner in the delivery of a project that is very personal and meaningful to the client you are working with.”

Founded in 1980 by Tom Hickman, the **Marco Group** runs on key principles of integrity, teamwork and commitment. These business principles have been set by Hickman and carried for transformational growth by his son Christopher, Marco Group’s CEO. They also serve as the company’s core values.

“When I actually saw these core values being realized in the work of every employee and senior manager in the face of the pandemic, I realized I work with a tremendously dedicated team here at Marco,” says MacIntosh.

Marco strives to create a work environment that feels like a family rather than a corporation. The core values play an influential part in this type of corporate culture, and MacIntosh sees them in action in every project they complete.

“My proudest moment was seeing the teamwork and commitment, we so often talk about, in action for the benefit of both our clients and each other,” says MacIntosh. “Everyone at Marco dug in and worked very hard without compromise or complaint as we implemented new COVID-19 procedures.”

Marco’s new normal is the result of its quick implementation of COVID-19 protocols. After being enforced, the protocols were also continuously implemented and improved alongside best practices and updates issued by the health department. In addition to the cooperation received from its construction partners, Marco returned to business with all projects remaining on schedule and on budget.

As the 2020 winner of **Canada’s Best Managed Companies**, Marco Group is leading several exciting **projects** in the HRM, Atlantic Canada and across the country.

The new **Berkeley Retirement Residence** on Pepperell street is set to provide residents the convenience of retirement living. The 76-room, six-story facility will have apartments with included services and the benefit of an onsite health care professional 24 hours a day.

A massive 42,000-square-meter facility is located on the MUN Campus in St. John’s, NL, thanks to Marco. Once completed, the **MUN Core Science Facility** will amalgamate most of the university scientific departments along with its administrative offices and labs from the Core Research Equipment and Instrument Training Network.

The ALT Hotels are expanding with a new location in the University District west of the University of Calgary campus. **ALT Hotel West Campus** is the fourth development by Marco for Groupe Germain set to be 15 stories high, housing 156 rooms.

“It’s always tremendously exciting to bid on a large public project and await the results of a public opening to see if you have won the bid,” says MacIntosh.

“But I would say that the most exciting and fulfilling projects that we undertake are the ones where we get to work with private business owners, who we recognize to have a choice on whom to contract with.”

Marco Group Limited is the pride of Atlantic Canada for its tremendous accomplishments and developments, not only in the region but also across the country. ■



photos from marcogroup.ca

# The future of work is here

And youth is the answer

CONTRIBUTED



Six years ago in a move that may seem risky to most, Ross Simmonds launched a fully remote content marketing agency, Foundation Marketing. Today, they serve some of the fastest growing start-ups and largest Fortune 500 brands in the world.

He attributes much of their global success to the young and innovative graduates they hire and says that the pandemic has not hindered their ability to work.

In fact, the increased need for digital marketing as a result of COVID19's impact on businesses, has allowed the company to make new hires at the peak of the pandemic.

"COVID19 has had a massive impact on every industry," says Simmonds.

"We've been able to grow through this time and we're continuing to grow as digital marketing becomes a bigger priority for brands than ever before. I can remember the recession of 2008 making it difficult for me to find a job when I graduated. So being able to hire locally even amidst a pandemic is a great feeling and will help sustain our momentum." Hiring young people was made easier

with the Graduate to Opportunity (GTO) program, which offers 25% of a grad's first year salary - 35% if the grad is diverse - and 12.5% of their second-year salary.

Maggie Archibald, a recent Public Relations grad from Mount Saint Vincent University, joined the company as a Content Marketing and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Specialist, with the support of GTO, "Maggie is shaping how we communicate with clients around the world," says Simmonds.

"She offers large scale SEO services and applies a very high level of emotional intelligence to tailor our messaging."

"GTO made it more appealing to take a step to hire more recent grads into the company," he says.

The GTO program is available to small businesses, start-ups and non-profit organizations. Complete applications are typically approved within three to five days.

"This opportunity is allowing me to grow professionally and personally," says Archibald. "As new grads we are

capable of so much and can open the eyes of an employer to new ways of reaching success. I like working for a company that allows me to work remotely, while influencing new ways of doing things."

"Every business benefits from the unique perspectives and work ethic of young people," says Simmonds.

"For us, it has translated into the success of multiple campaigns and initiatives."

"Hiring a young, diverse team gives us a competitive edge. This is an opportunity that exists for all Nova Scotian companies that want to compete on a national scale."

When you are ready to hire someone new, consider hiring a recent grad.

To date, more than 600 organizations like Foundation Marketing have hired more than 1,000 recent graduates across Nova Scotia using GTO funding.

GTO could save you money on the next person you hire. Learn more at [www.novascotia.ca/GTO](http://www.novascotia.ca/GTO)

# Garnering Support from Gen-Z

How to motivate Gen-Z to support your charitable cause



**KRISTEN BINNS**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
ASSISTANT/CO-OP STUDENT,  
THE LUNG ASSOCIATION OF  
NOVA SCOTIA

By 2025, Gen-Z will be approaching their thirties and have more money in their pockets, with disposable income to spend. However, some charities might have a difficult job convincing this generation their cause is worth investing in.

Gen-Z is the most diverse and technically-inclined generation yet, with a unique set of characteristics that are important for your organization to understand if you are looking to start building meaningful connections.

## The Defining Characteristics of Gen-Z

Gen-Z, occasionally called Gen We, is loosely defined as the generation born between 1995 and 2010. Since their early youth, this generation has been exposed to the digital realm.

The defining characteristic possessed by Gen-Z is their high levels of motivation in the search for truth and justice in society. This defining characteristic has led to more openness and understanding

**“**Gen-Z is the most diverse and technically-inclined generation yet, with a unique set of characteristics that are important for your organization to understand if you are looking to start building meaningful connections.”

— **Kristen Binns**, Communications Assistant/Co-op Student, Lung Association NS

of individual experiences, along with welcoming freedom of expression and rejecting labels and stereotypes.

In contrast to Millennials, Gen-Z is more likely to seek job stability than freelance work. They are less idealistic when it comes to money, being aware that they need to save for the future.

However, while Gen-Z may be less likely to spend money frivolously, they are highly motivated towards causes that fight for truth and justice.

## How to motivate Gen-Z towards your cause

If you position your cause as a social injustice, Gen-Z will be more likely to connect and respond to your requests for support.

For example, instead of simply saying people are falling ill and need your support, try connecting the “why” people falling ill is an issue. Is it because of a gap in a system, corporations bending rules, or maybe an old policy that hasn't been updated in decades?

Look for an angle that uncovers the truth and gives direction on where justice can truly be found. You can then communicate that truth to Gen-Z.

## The best channels to communicate with Gen-Z

Getting the right message is important, but it won't go far without using the right lines of communication.

Gen-Z can be reached through multiple channels of communications, some newer and some more traditional. Believe it or not, email can be an effective way to communicate with Gen-Z. The majority of this generation have an email account and check it on a regular basis.

YouTube is a second platform that is popular among Gen-Z, more so than regular television programming.

Third, social media is an important method for communicating with Gen-Z. Instagram is currently the social media platform of choice among this generation, with TikTok on the rise after increasing in popularity over the past six months.

These platforms are not only where you will find Gen-Z, but they also present the advantage of being highly visual with the capacity to evoke more emotion.

It is time to start examining how your organization is connecting with this new generation while researching what else can be done to nurture these relationships.

The earlier you can build connections, the stronger they will grow.

Take time to focus on creating a mutually-beneficial relationship with Gen-Z to achieve goals that are important to both parties.



# YOUR AD HERE

Advertise your business with  
**Business Voice Magazine!**



Emma Menchefski, Communications Manager  
[emma@halifaxchamber.com](mailto:emma@halifaxchamber.com)

# I'M A CHAMBER MEMBER

“We’re still a Chamber member because our relationship with the Halifax Chamber has been instrumental in providing us with important **connections and opportunities** in the business community. The **Chamber events** offer excellent profile and a broad reach for our brand, as well as a chance to support local business initiatives.”



**Cailin Winters,**  
Marketing Generalist,  
BOYNECLARKE LLP

## BE A MEMBER

[halifaxchamber.com/become-a-member](https://halifaxchamber.com/become-a-member)

HALIFAX  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

# COVID-19 and the Nova Scotia economy

Looking through the government and business perspectives

## KENT ROBERTS

VICE PRESIDENT, POLICY,  
HALIFAX CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE &

## KATHLEEN MACEACHERN

POLICY ANALYST, HALIFAX  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The terminology has begun to shift as people and economies around the world continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is dropping the Wave 2 vernacular from their speaking points and is focusing instead on "continual management" as the current situation could be the "reality for years to come".

Terms such as "whack-a-mole" are becoming more mainstream, referring to the ability to aggressively knock down outbreaks as they occur and rein them in.

It is now the general belief that further outbreaks are inevitable and will have to be dealt with aggressively as they occur.

Taking steps now, from both an action and policy perspective, could help mitigate the impacts of another outbreak, while simultaneously preparing citizens and businesses for that potential is prudent.

There does appear to be one item of consensus amongst economists and governments across the globe. As the pandemic persists, the very last resort is a repeat of the complete economic shutdown we saw in early 2020.

From an individual business to an entire county or town, governments will need to have a rapid reaction plan in place with strict protocols to narrow the effect of an outbreak, so we do not have a repeat of the devastating consequences of Wave 1.

So, what does that mean for the organizations we represent, to the broader business community and the



general populace. These three groups are of course not mutually exclusive, and overlaps will occur.

As a business and not-for-profit advocacy organization, we will use a member-based lens first and foremost. But, as mentioned, many of these considerations will apply across the broader populace.

We cannot also influence what governments outside of our jurisdiction implement. But Nova Scotia can be a model of how it should be done and how businesses can proceed under these new conditions, by following reasonable protocols and having progressive policies in place.

In the full article we delve into topics like broad protections, information and communication, the economy, the skilled workforce, and other relevant issues that are impacting our global business community.

The piece also reflects on what businesses can do to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the coming months and how being

prepared can increase the likelihood of remaining economically sustainable until there is a vaccine available.

The virus is going to be with us for quite some time, so we need to learn how to do the things we enjoy safely, without risking the health of others.

We want our members to ask themselves the tough questions. What would a renewed outbreak mean for their business? How do they continue to pivot and at what cost will this be? There are some factors businesses can control and some they cannot.

With the potential of further outbreaks, businesses must once again pivot and adapt as government funding might not be as readily available, and cooler weather may inhibit outdoor business spaces. Read the [full piece!](#)

# Nutri-Lawn committed to excellence

Sharing a few tips and tricks on how to keep your lawn healthy



Nutri-Lawn has become the leader in ecology-friendly lawn care in Nova Scotia. In 2020, they are celebrating 30 years of nourishing lawns and lives.

General Manager Steve Smith says, “Our business is currently growing every day. In 2014 we expanded to Moncton, NB and in 2020 we have grown to include Truro, NS in our service area. We now take care of over 4,000 lawns.”

Our success is built on passionate, dependable and professional employees who embrace our company values and core beliefs.

This spring, our leadership team exceeded expectations, including working extra hours, embracing our COVID-19 protocol and, in some cases, working from home for 3.5 months. As we continue to expand, we are always looking to add good people to our growing team.

“There are three essential factors if you want a healthy lawn - fertility, water and mowing,” Smith says. “When all three are done properly, turf can resist weed and insect pressures.”

The thicker the lawn, the more difficult

for weeds to flourish. For example, golf courses use very little weed control. Even though the turf is cut short, with a strict regimen of frequent mowing, watering, fertilizing, and over-seeding keeps courses weed free.

“Grass needs balanced nutrition for growth. Without fertility, grasses thin out and weeds take hold, to the point of dominating the space for light, soil and water.”

Nutri-Lawn recommends using a controlled-release fertilizer for consistent, predictable feeding for up to 120 days. This technology eliminates rapid growth surges and excessive clippings.

Also, applying kelp during the summer adds nutrients to help a lawn recover from and protect against the effects of heat stress.

Smith recommends mowing at 2.5 to 3.0” weekly. Springtime requires more frequent cutting because a large percentage of growth occurs then.

“Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade; otherwise stress will result in browning,” he says. “Sharpen the blade

regularly to avoid fuzzy mowing. A dull blade creates a ragged cut.”

We encourage watering weekly in the early morning and increasing frequency during hot periods.

Avoiding evening watering prevents the lawn from being wet until the morning sun dries the lawn.

Watering techniques should be adjusted during the growing season to compensate for precipitation and lengthy hot, dry periods.

Our leadership team would like to thank our customers for giving us the privilege to service you.

We are committed to an extraordinary level of service to our customers and an unending commitment to the best brand, products and practices in the marketplace.

Special thanks to our long-time customers, some of whom have been faithful supporters for all 30 years.

Learn more about [Nutri-Lawn](#).

# 2019's successes set the foundation for Halifax's economic recovery

Based on the 2020 edition of the Halifax Index



**IAN MUNRO**  
CHIEF ECONOMIST,  
HALIFAX PARTNERSHIP

In June, the Halifax Partnership published the 2020 edition of the [Halifax Index](#).

The Index tells our city's story: it provides insights from the prior year to help Halifax strengthen and grow, and it measures results against a scorecard of social and economic indicators.

The 2020 Index, however, is unlike previous editions in that it serves two purposes: to measure and report on progress made in 2019 and to identify the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

It won't surprise many that 2019 was an excellent year for Halifax. Our city boasted vibrancy and growth with:

- New records for population growth and net international and interprovincial migration
- An increase in employment and decrease in unemployment
- The highest GDP growth in years
- High business confidence
- An increase in total enrolment at Halifax universities for the first time in five years
- Record international student enrolment
- An increase in the labour force



*While 2019 was a banner year, for reasons entirely unanticipated and outside of our control, 2020 is painting a very different picture for our city."*

— Ian Munro, Chief Economist, Halifax Partnership

participation rate (the share of the adult population in the labour force)

- New records for cruise ship passengers and air cargo

While celebrating this success, there are areas where there is work to be done. As we reopen and reimagine Halifax and recover from COVID-19 impacts, we must strive to ensure that no one is left behind.

Apartment rents increased and the vacancy rate dropped below one percent. Residents' ratings of housing affordability dropped to a record low, and businesses said the cost of living is a net disadvantage for Halifax. Consumer insolvencies in Halifax reached a peak last year for the period 2011-19.

While 2019 was a banner year, for reasons entirely unanticipated and outside of our control, 2020 is painting a very different picture for our city:

- Forecasts have Halifax's GDP contracting by 3.4%
- The tourism, retail, restaurant and personal services industries all experienced major hits to sales and employment
- Current unemployment rates are around 12%
- The labour under-utilization rate (which includes those who have stopped looking for work and are experiencing reductions in hours worked) jumped during the crisis to around 35%

These are just the preliminary measures.

New data points that show the impact of COVID-19 on population growth, immigration, international student enrolment and business and consumer insolvencies will be rolling out in the coming months and over the next year. Our city will likely see substantial declines in these areas, at least for the short term.

The silver lining is that the strength of Halifax's economy in 2019, in addition to the effort and sacrifice all Nova Scotians made to stay home and slow the spread of COVID-19, have made Halifax well-placed to rebound quickly.

Moreover, **many businesses have made innovative shifts** in their products, services and delivery models in response to COVID-19 that will serve our city well as we continue our economic recovery.

While uncertainties remain, particularly as we move into the fall and the potential of a second wave, we can continue to act with responsibility, compassion and commitment – towards each other, our communities and businesses.

Let's celebrate the great work we've done so far to manage the spread of the virus in our city and province, and let's support local business whenever and wherever possible.

For these findings and more, view the first digital Halifax Index at [halifaxindex.com](http://halifaxindex.com).

# Finding a silver lining

A look at how COVID-19 brought the world together



**MINA ATIA**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR, INTERN  
HALIFAX CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

Our way of life has been altered in every sense of the word. We are shifting how we conduct ourselves on daily basis when it comes to medical, social and economic matters.

We are wearing masks and practicing healthier hygiene etiquettes. We are working remotely, reducing commuting to a bare minimum and interacting with others from a distance.

We are conducting business as usual, unusually.

It's easy to point out COVID-19 has upended our lives and changed virtually every aspect of how we work, live and interact. Granted, as a species, we are wary of change and act accordingly.

Yet, in spite of our instinctual response to change, there are some curious and unexpected positive side effects to the pandemic-induced shifts in our behaviour.

**“***In spite of our instinctual response to change, there are some curious and unexpected positive side effects to the pandemic-induced shifts in our behaviour.”*

— **Mina Atia**, Communications Coordinator,  
Intern, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

Let's take a quick peek under the dark veil of COVID-19 and allow ourselves a moment to take in the positives:

## Environmentally

The planet is reaping most of the rewards from our behavioural changes. The sky is bluer, water is clearer, fewer cars are crashing and traffic is at a good kind of standstill.

NASA satellites **recorded** an all-time low air pollution and **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** since World War II. There's a significant pollution reduction of 20 to 30 per cent in major cities, which ultimately is correlating to significant health benefits.

The ozone layer is recovering fast and reducing global warming effects on the atmosphere, thanks to lockdown.

Cleaner beaches and oceans, as a result of the social distancing measures, is allowing the critical survival of coastal communities and ocean life.

For the first time in decades, you can see clearly through **the waters of Venice**. With the decrease in boating activities, gondola traffic and treading of waters, the sediment is remaining at the bottom of the canals and allowing a crystal clear view around the city.

**Reports** of traffic volume falling by 55 per cent is yielding results of fewer

trauma-related admissions to hospitals. This reduction in traffic accidents is unparalleled, with an estimated \$40 million in public savings every day, according to the director of the Road Ecology Center at the University of California.

Moreover, a notable reduction of environmental noise levels is apparent. Noise from industrial and commercial activities, the sound of engine vehicles and melodies at high volume all used to cause health problems and disruptions in the environment.

Its decrease is positively affecting overall population health and preserving natural conditions of the ecosystems.

## Economically

A new wave of online tools and software is experiencing an all-time-high demand.

The increased need for platforms to connect with others and continue working remotely is sky-rocketing revenues and profits for IT companies. This demand will grow the industry and create jobs for generations to come.

This demand is also transforming the image of remote work from millennial tech start-up to a mainstream option for many organizations.

The pandemic proved it is possible for

people to work from home and conduct business with few interruptions. Being mandated to work from home showed companies the reality of the benefits of remote work, and many are now downsizing on their real-estate due to the decreased need for office space and facilities. They're saving on rent, bills and overhead expenses.

This decrease is making real estate affordable in major cities.

Moving to different cities is no longer necessary for job opportunities. Alternative office spaces and working from home are allowing talent recruitment to go beyond postal codes, creating value for rural areas as well as urban.

**Medically**

A number of infectious diseases (excluding the coronavirus) are not as frequently treated at hospitals and emergency departments.

A sharp decline in disease such as influenza, respiratory viruses and human illnesses has been noticed by medical professionals all over the globe.

This nosedive decline is directly related to the newly-emphasized and improved hygienic practices: hand washing and covering of coughs or sneezes.

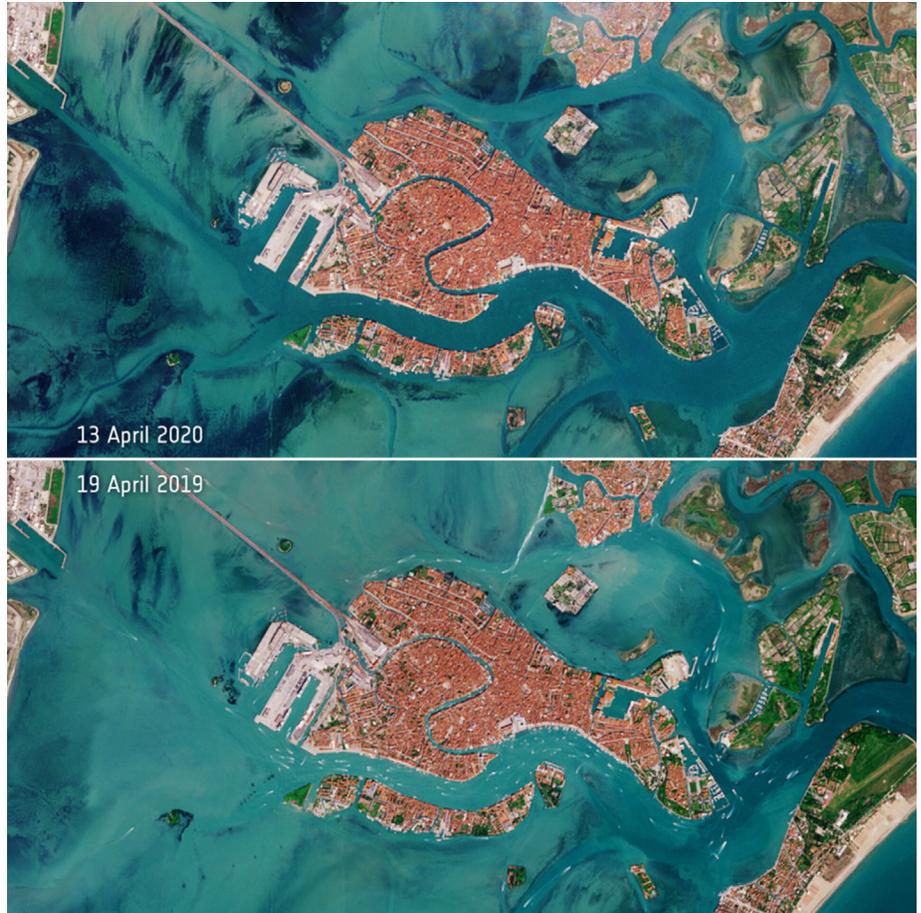
**Socially**

We are building and better maintaining genuine relationships. Less frequent excursions outside of our homes and more time spent inside with loved ones are offering us that privilege.

Families and friends are coming together to enjoy quality interactions.

Less time spent getting ready in the morning and commuting is more time allotted to thinking and reflecting. We have the opportunity to mentally recharge without the pressures of social obligations, impending deadlines and day-to-day expectations.

Less busy schedules with less running around for errands or rushing to urgent meetings.



The European Space Agency has released two satellite images, one year apart, of Venice, where deep blue water is more prevalent. The Italian government imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 9, 2020, drastically reducing the movement of Venice's boats including water buses, as well as cruise ships.

**“** *Moving to different cities is no longer necessary for job opportunities. Alternative office spaces and working from home are allowing talent recruitment to go beyond postal codes, creating value for rural areas as well as urban.* ”  
**— Mina Atia,**  
 Communications Coordinator, Intern, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

We can do a number of our daily tasks from the comfort of home.

In a time of financial uncertainty for so many, it's more than fair that we focus on the large-scale social and economic changes our world needs.

To realize the way our world was operating needed an abrupt change IS in fact a positive. Let's give ourselves a daily break to breathe and self-reflect on what has changed for us, what is yet to change, and which changes can propel us forward.

We will learn from this pandemic and use it to rebuild, refocus and make global changes.

We can look at this year of constant change and start planning for a better future.

From the Halifax Chamber of Commerce team  
and our members:

# THANK YOU.

Our members continue to lead the way during this new normal. They share insights, knowledge and expertise to support businesses through the next phases of the pandemic. We continue hosting webinars with field experts, and we started holding in-person events – so much to look forward to this month. Thank you to the following organizations and individuals for actively participating and reaching out to keep the business community prepared and able to move forward.

